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ABSTRACT

The French Language Immersion Program (FLIP) at Plattsburgh State University College, is described in terms of its origin, implementation, operation, research, long-range plans, and social implications. As a research and demonstration program at the laboratory school of the State University College of New York at Plattsburgh, the class consisted of 18 five and six year old children whose native language was English. Although the class was conducted entirely in French, the children were free to speak English among themselves. The FLIP program is bilingual education undertaken primarily for cultural enrichment by monolinguals. The early and full immersion program is structured and led by an experienced French individual. The program has high administrative support, high community visibility, and high parental interest, and children are voluntarily enrolled in the program. FLIP has been the subject of extensive research conducted by an interdisciplinary research team of faculty members. The following set of abilities are thought to be related to language competence: auditory discrimination skills, receptive language ability, expressive language skills, intellectual aptitude, academic achievement, self concept, cultural attitudes, and school attitudes. The tests that were used to assess these and more specific English language skills are listed. Initial research hypotheses based on the administration of the tests are briefly outlined. (SW)

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THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

W. Derrick - History of FLIP

D. Dirlam - Principal and rationale of FLIP

P. Hornby and M. Singson - Research of FLIP

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INTRODUCTION

Bilingual educational goals may be compensatory or enriching. Compensatory bilingual education is designed to develop competence in a majority language among minority group individuals in an effort to assimilate them into the dominant culture. In this instance, the second language is seen as necessary to participation in the larger society and meant to eventually equal or supplant an individual's first language in importance and usage. Bilingual education also may serve an enrichment function; that is, a second language may be acquired for the purpose of extending, not replacing, an individual's cultural linguistic heritage. Bilingual education as enrichment usually occurs when members of a majority group learn a minority language. These two functions of bilingual education are discussed at length by Fishman (1976) and Cohen (1976).

The goals of bilingual education currently practiced in the United States has been primarily compensatory in nature (Fishman, 1976). Most bilingual education programs have been designed to facilitate the linguistic and cultural transition of minorities to an English language culture. The teaching of a second language to majority group individuals whose native language is English has been less intensive. In American education,

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languages other than English have generally been taught in the same way as any other school subject, with no more than an hour a day devoted to second language instruction. The FLES programs (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) have been a step closer to a more comprehensive effort at teaching a second language to American students. However, these programs have suffered the same pedagogical limitations as foreign language instruction in the secondary and postsecondary levels. The failure of FLES programs in developing second language competence beyond the level accomplished by traditional programs has been attributed to their failure in providing educational environments that approximate the natural sequence and strategies of first language acquisition (Cohen, 1976). Formal and informal observations have suggested that a language is normally acquired through familiarity and use of the language in everyday interactions over a period of time.

The concept of bilingual education as enrichment for minority and majority groups needs to be tested in more viable programs of second language instruction. Language immersion programs developed in Canada offer a promising approach to bilingual education and are now beginning to be tried out in the United States. It is of interest that pilot immersion programs in the United States have been directed at majority groups.

The Plattsburgh French Language Immersion Program (FLIP) is one of a small number of second language immersion programs for majority group children in the United States. Other programs for majority group children include a Spanish immersion program at the El Marino School in Culver City, California, which began with one kindergarten class in 1971, and a French immersion program at the Four Corners School in Silver Springs, Maryland, which started with a multigrade 1-3 class in 1974.

The following French Language Immersion Program (FLIP) report at PSUC's

ERDC is prepared to provide information about its origin, implementation, operation, research, long-range plans and social implications. Commonly used abbreviations and terms in the following report are:

1. PSUC - Plattsburgh State University College
2. CEC - Comprehensive Educational Center
3. ERDC - Educational Research and Demonstration Center, a school component of the CEC
4. FLIP - French Language Immersion Program
5. PSBGM - Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal
6. First Language - The learner's first learned (native) language
7. Second Language - The medium of instruction

DEFINITION

A language immersion program at the primary level is a pedagogical method for effecting bilingualism. Programs using this method conduct all classroom activities in a second language -- a language other than the student's mother tongue. In contrast to traditional pedagogy, the second language is initially the medium of instruction, but not the object of instruction. Also in contrast to traditional pedagogy, the percent of learning time in the second language is inversely related to the learner's facility in the second language. In the beginning, the teacher uses the second language exclusively. As the children's comprehension and fluency increase in a primary level immersion program, the native or first language is introduced as a language arts subject. This usually occurs at the end of second grade, after a two-year experience with the second language in kindergarten and first grade. After fluency in the second language is achieved, sufficient use of this language is maintained to sustain growth in linguistic skills. The students' use of the first language is sufficient for it to be equally functional for academic and social activities.

ORIGIN OF PROGRAM AT PSUC

The French Language Immersion Program (FLIP) is a direct outgrowth of the International Conference on Bilingualism (March 1976) arranged by Peter Hornby of PSUC's psychology department. The data presented at this meeting, and Dr. William Derrick's (Director of the C.E.C.) personal experiences of teaching multilingual elementary children in Europe prompted him to propose a full immersion program for research and demonstration at the ERDC school. This proposal was presented first to David Dirlam, ERDC Acting Program Director. The initial proposal was followed by evaluative discussions and test probes with parents, PSUC faculty, ERDC faculty and public educators. Dean Dale Nitzschke and William Derrick visited Malcolm Stanley, PSBGM Director of Instructional Services. Malcolm Stanley reviewed the PSBGM experiences with full immersion primary learning for anglophone children, which began in 1968. The visit was followed in April, 1976 by a letter of authorization from Dean Nitzschke for W. Derrick to proceed with implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

A. Advisory Group: In May, 1976 an advisory panel was convened for the purpose of providing advice for implementation and to keep interested groups informed. The group, chaired by W. Derrick, included representation from the State Education Department's Bureau of Foreign Language Teaching, local public school language teachers, PSUC faculty members, ERDC faculty and parents.

B. Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal: The process of planning and implementation through the summer and fall of 1976 depended heavily on the interest and help of PSBGM. M. Stanley generously gave assistance and advice drawn from PSBGM's experience in curriculum development and research. He also provided services from PSBGM's Consultant on Primary Immersion, Rhoda Tafler, and Immersion Researcher, Fred Genesee. This

assistance took the form of:

1. providing curriculum materials developed at PSBGM
2. school visitations to immersion classes
3. consultation in Plattsburgh of PSBGM personnel with the FLIP advisory group, ERDC faculty and prospective parents
4. selection of classroom materials in Montreal educational supply house
5. advice on research planning
6. an official PSBGM agreement to enter into a teacher exchange or to supply a teacher on a direct contract basis
7. notice of teacher exchange opportunity in PSBGM's personnel newsletter

This excellent professional relationship has continued. The consultants have taken part in classroom evaluation, research design, and workshop planning.

C. Parents: Several parent meetings were held to interpret the expectations and opportunities of immersion learning. Parental interest was great and more parents wanted their children to attend than could be accomodated.

D. Class Determination: The age of applicants ranged from 4 through 9 years. After consideration of both the number and age level of applicants and the curriculum, it was determined that the first class would include about 20 five and six year old children for a combination kindergarten and first grade classroom. Planners and parents agreed that it would be better to begin the program before formal reading and English had begun.

E. Language Determination: French was chosen mainly due to PSBGM's experience in French and Plattsburgh's proximity to the province of Quebec. Not only do many Plattsburgh families visit Montreal frequently, but there are four TV channels and a number of radio stations received in French in Plattsburgh.

F. Staffing: Applicants for the teaching position included Nicole Royet. She had been a full immersion primary teacher in St. Lambert, a South Shore suburb of Montreal where the first research-based immersion program in North America was begun. (Lambert). Her qualifications and experience were congruent with the job description and qualifications. Robin Drake, Personnel Officer of the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board was able to arrange leave without penalty for her to join FLIP as the first teacher. In Canada, teaching personnel must declare by March 15th their intention for the following year, and interruption of service without cause results in "black listing" in the provinces and other loss of benefits.

LONG RANGE PLANS

A. Class Determination: Given a successful first year and continued parent interest, a second class is anticipated in September, 1977 and each year thereafter. Although a single age group of five year olds for kindergarten is preferred, it may again be necessary to have a combined age group. The ages and numbers of FLIP applicants will determine the age grouping of the next class.

B. Staffing:

1. Projection: It is anticipated that FLIP can grow within the present ERDC structure in a low profile posture without threat to other programs or present faculty. Classroom instructional medium will simply be in two languages for FLIP students as they progress. Staffing for minimum immersion requirements can be projected as displayed as follows:

2. Teacher Recruitment:

Spring 1977: A second teacher will be needed. A specific qualification in the next teacher must be full English-French bilingual capability since the assignment may be for half-day instruction in both languages, for example, A.M. English preschool class of four year olds and

a PM class of FLIP five year olds. Another effort to attract an experienced PSBGM immersion teacher will be mounted as well as a national/international media search. The French Cultural Attache in New York City has offered to assist in recruitment, interviewing and training in France, if needed.

No problem is seen, initially, in attracting qualified elementary teachers with native speaking capabilities in the second language. Bilingual facility in French will be noted as a desirable quality in all future teacher job descriptions. Bilingual teachers in any discipline will broaden flexibility in scheduling and diminish the need for specifically trained teachers. Further, the presence of other bilingual teachers in the school provides subtle signs of support and acceptance to bilingualism and diminishes any negative minimal cues peers may exhibit toward use of a second language.

3. Costs: The costs of materials, i.e. textbooks for the classroom and supplemental library books in French, will put a strain mainly on the selection of library books, not so much the selection of classroom books. It is anticipated that classroom books and series would be replaced in the normal course of English instruction and that the French textbooks would replace some of those normally acquired in English. There will be initial class outfitting of textbooks for each group as it moves upwards through the grades and this is estimated at an annual cost of $750.00 for the classroom. Another $500 annually should suffice to build a French collection of a wide variety.

Program Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calendar Year	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
Bilingual Teacher(s)	1	1/2 1	1/2 1 1	1/2 1 1 1/2	1/2 1 1 1/2 1/3	1/2 1 1 1/2 1/3 1/4
Student age	5/6	5 6/7	5 6 7/8	5 6 7 8/9	5 6 7 8 9/10	5 6 7 8 9 10/11
Grade	K-1	K 1/2	K 1 2/2	K 1 2 3/4	K 1 2 3 4/5	K 1 2 3 4 5/6
No. of students	20	20 20	20 20 20	20 20 20 20	20 20 20 20 20	20 20 20 20 20 20
No. of teachers	1	1-1/2	2-1/2	3	3-1/3	3-7/12

Program Year	7	8
Calendar Year	1982-83	1983-84
Bilingual Teacher(s)	1/2 1 1 1/2 1/3 1/4 1/4	1/2 1 1 1/2 1/3 1/4 1/4 1/4
Student age	5 6 7 8 9 10 11/12	5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12/13
Grade	K 1 2 3 4 5 6/7	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7/8
No. of students	20 20 20 20 20 20 20	20 20 20 20 20 20 10 20
No. of teachers	3-5/6	4-1/12

At the present it is projected that in eight years no more than four immersion teachers will be required. To offset the projected fractional positions, see the teacher recruitment emphasis noted in the second paragraph in B, following:

4. Educational Impact: The time may be right in American society for the introduction of bilingualism through this primary immersion program. The impact of the international realities of business and diplomacy today make the concept of bilingualism imperative. There is also the argument that bilingualism is a distinct personal advantage in the course of one's life, since it provides an understanding of more than one culture. A further meaning of bilingualism is simply that an individual is effectively able to communicate in two languages. However, Americans have been reluctant to exert the effort needed, as has been done in the Soviet Union and Western Europe, to influence the high schools or colleges to offer programs which result in bilingualism. Presently, Federal expenditures for bilingualism are to assist those members of the American population who do not speak the dominant language, English.

In our program, we are providing monolingual children with the opportunity to become bilingual. The concept, in its broadest application, indicates that we can develop bilingual capabilities in any school in the United States, whatever language was desired by the local school.

Program Variables

The Plattsburgh FLIP program was established in September, 1976, with one full-day K-1 class. The FLIP class is one of 12 classes ranging from nursery to eighth grade at the ERDC, a laboratory school of the State University College of New York at Plattsburgh. The class consists of eighteen 5 and 6 year old children whose native language is English. Although the class is conducted entirely in French, the children are free to speak English among themselves.

From a research standpoint, FLIP may be viewed as a treatment condition having the following characteristics:

1. Bilingual Education as Enrichment. FLIP participants are native

speakers of English and learning French is undertaken primarily for cultural enrichment.

2. Monolingual Context. In contrast to French immersion programs in Montreal, the immediate language and cultural setting of FLIP is almost entirely English-American.

3. Early Immersion Program. Children are exposed to French as a medium of instruction beginning at the kindergarten age.

4. Full Immersion Program. The entire school day is conducted completely in French until grades two or three when English language arts will be introduced and taught in English. Thereafter, the use of English as a formal language of the classroom is expected to increase until school subjects are taught for an optimum proportion of time in English and in French.

5. Experienced Teacher. The initial FLIP class is taught by a French woman who has served as an immersion kindergarten teacher for the last seven years in St. Lambert, Quebec.

6. Structured Program. Children's undivided attention to the teacher has been considered vital. This year, FLIP classroom activities are highly organized and generally follow a lecture-recitation format.

7. Campus School Setting. The FLIP class is located within a university laboratory school. As an experimental program within a laboratory school, the FLIP class is visited and observed frequently.

8. High Administrative Support.

9. High Community Visibility. The program has been televised over three networks, described in newspaper articles, presented in a university behavioral sciences colloquium.

10. High Parental Interest. Parents voluntarily enrolled their children in the program and have maintained an active contact with the school. They have attended a series of FLIP parent meetings and have received newsletters

on FLIP activities.

11. Program Enrollment. Children were voluntarily enrolled in the program and hence may be an atypical group. FLIP children's socioeconomic background, motivation for learning and basic aptitudes may be different from average children in typical school settings. However, for the evaluation study, FLIP children are compared with children having similar backgrounds and abilities.

12. Research. Finally, FLIP has been the subject of extensive research conducted by an interdisciplinary research team of faculty members from various departments at the university. A detailed description of the FLIP research program follows.

These twelve program characteristics need to be considered in generating research hypotheses, in interpreting the research data and in generalizing research findings to other settings.

Product Variables

Bilingualism may be viewed as a genuine asset only if a person achieves mastery of both languages; that is, only if one gains a language in all its dimensions without losing another. Language is a complex process which includes linguistic, academic, cognitive, personality, social and cultural factors. Language is a system of symbols which conveys personal, social and cultural events. As such, its use entails a facility in symbol manipulation and involves an exchange of personal, social and cultural experience. The successful use of a language should enhance effectiveness in other facets of human behavior which are significantly interrelated with language. Because of the extensive domain of language, an evaluation of language ability needs to consider intelligence, school achievement, self concept, social and cultural attitudes as well as more specific language comprehension and production skills.

The first problem which faced the FLIP research team was the identification of variables which may be associated with language competence and the development of procedures for measuring these. The set of abilities which were felt most likely to be related to language competence and the tests which were used to assess these and more specific English language skills are the following:

1. Auditory Discrimination Skills - The Goldman-Fristor-Woodcock Test for Auditory Discrimination (GFW).

2. Receptive Language Ability - Children's ability to understand oral English is being measured by the Carrow Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language (Carrow).

3. Expressive Language Skills - Verbal fluency is being measured by a test constructed by our research group. Children are asked to "tell a story" of one minute about each of four black and white cartoon-type drawings presented in a standard array.

4. Intellectual Aptitude - The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC).

5. Academic Achievement - Children's achievement in reading, spelling and arithmetic is being measured by the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT).

6. Self-Concept - The Purdue Self-Concept Scale for Children consists of 40 items measuring children's perception of their skills in various areas.

7. Cultural Attitudes - Subject's attitudes toward French, American and Black children were measured by 25 items in the Plattsburgh School and Cultural Attitude Survey for children, designed by our research group. The attitude survey requires children to indicate which of three faces (happy, sad, or neutral) reflects their feelings about various situations.

8. School Attitudes - The measure for children's attitude towards school is a subscale of the attitude survey described in the preceding section

and consists of ten items such as: " Which face shows how you feel about coming to school?"

9. French Language Test - FLIP children's French language skills will be assessed using a French translation of the Carrow and an expressive language test in French similar to that described in item 3 above. Other tests of French language ability such as the French Comprehension Test developed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education are being considered.

Data Collection

The above battery of English tests was given to all 18 FLIP children and 14 children in an English control group between September 23 and November 11, 1976. The English control group consists of a class of 5 and 6 year old children at the Campus School which uses English as its medium of instruction. These tests will be given to FLIP and English control children again in April, 1977. The research design employed in the first year is a comparison of pre and post-test scores of FLIP and control children on the previously described measures. The data will be analyzed separately for total and subtest scores for each measure using the analysis of covariance.

Initial t-test analyses on the pretest data suggest that there are no significant differences between FLIP and English control groups on any of the dependent measures.

Initial Research Hypotheses

Given that the major objective of the Plattsburgh French Immersion Program is the development of effective bilingualism, the FLIP research program has as its long-range goal the development of a comprehensive set of data that will provide answers to three general questions:

1. To what extent are FLIP participants achieving true bilingualism?

2. What factors contribute to the development of true bilingualism?

3. What are the processes involved in achieving true bilingualism?

This year, the FLIP study is primarily concerned with the first question. That is, the French Immersion Program is being viewed as an independent variable and its influence on a set of abilities which are seen to be associated with language competence is being assessed. Succeeding phases of the research will look at success in acquiring a second language as a dependent variable and attempt to answer the other two questions.

The specific research hypotheses that are being tested this year are as follows:

1. The FLIP group will not differ significantly from a comparable group of anglophone children in a class using English as its medium of instruction (English Control Group) on tests of ability to understand, speak, read, write and learn basic school subjects in English.

2. Because of the cognitive flexibility and cultural enrichment possible in the use of two languages (Taylor, 1976), it is expected that the FLIP group will obtain appreciably higher scores on tests of intelligence, school attitudes, self-concept and cultural attitudes than the English control group.

3. The FLIP group will not differ significantly on tests of French language skills from a comparable group of anglophone children in a French immersion program in Montreal (Canadian Fremch immersion control group).

4. The FLIP group will perform significantly better on tests of French language skills than a comparable groups of anglophone children from a FLES program (American FLES control group). The possibility of testing this hypothesis will depend on the ability of a comparable FLES group.

5. The pattern of scores within each of the dependent measures will differ in FLIP and English control groups. An analysis of within-test score patterns is expected to reveal differences in a given measure that are not observed in

total test scores and to clarify the nature of observed differences in total test scores between FLIP and control groups.

Additional Research Procedures

In addition to summative analyses on the above data, videotape records of selected productive and receptive language activities are being collected from the FLIP classroom every seven weeks. This series of videotapes will allow a documentation of: (a) each child's pattern of growth in understanding and speaking French; (b) the relationship between gestural and verbal components of language acquisition; and (c) instructional procedures used in the FLIP classroom.

The above description constitutes the current design of the FLIP research program. It is expected that a variety of supplementary research goals and procedures appropriate to the FLIP model may be defined and it is toward the development of additional research strategies that the March FLIP Research Workshop is directed.